West Butler Sept. the 12th 1852

TORREY CORRESPONDENCE
HERBARIUM
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY.

Mr John Torrey M.D.
New York Dear Sir

Yours of [illegible] 12th was duly rec'd. I am highly gratified with the opportunity of contributing, (though a mere trifle in comparison) something to the "Flora" of the "Empire State" — It is an established fact, too often deplored by all botanists with whom I am acquainted, that our best Botanical Books fall far short of imparting all the information so eagerly sought by the practical botanist or the more zealous student — and more especially has this charge been prefered against the Flora of our state. So far as Western New York, and I might add the northern portion of the state are concerned, I must assent to the imputation, and I think our State should take measures to effect a more thorough knowledge of the botanical productions of these portions of the state, than ever can be effected by private individual research, or accidental discovery — if not, it will be many years before any thing like a Thorough knowledge of American Botany can be attained — and here let me respectfully suggest. and earnestly request, that your Supplement to the Flora should comprise at least one large Volume of Plates of the most rare plants, and those that are sectional, or confined to limited localities — The advantages derived from pictorial illustrations are without a parallel. —

Since my first communication, I have sold my farm and do not expect to reside in this state more than a year or so, during which time it will be my purpose to impart such information as I now have or may hereafter aquire, and shall doubtless ask some, on some points — In regard to furnishing specimens of living plants, or even dried ones I will attend to it to any amount you may desire — for which I ask no silver or gold, but something of greater value — if you could send me orders for specimens for the use

of the students of your Medical College to the amount of some Botanical Books which I do not possess you would thereby confer a favor on one whose greatest efforts would be exerted to merit it — The books that I am the most desirous of obtaining at present, are Torrey & Grays Flora of North America and Elliots Botany of the Southern States — but would accept any which I do not possess — this has no reference to the specimens you desired me to send — Does Doct Gray now reside at Cambridge University? — would he not be likely to want live specimens for the Botanic Garden of which he has charge?

I will now speak of plants, beginning with Nardosmia palmata which grows in abundance in the town of Wayland, Steuben Co. on a Mr Dildines farm and wild land adjoining — He owns a steam saw mill and lives on the direct road from Bloods Corners (in Conhocton) to Dansville — It is on the S. side of the road in a cedar swamp (Thuja occidentalis) of 5 miles extent near the head of the Conhocton river. —

The locality of Phlox subulata I perceive is not given in this State — I have found it abundant in several localities — first on "Terrace Hill" at Jefferson, head of Seneca Lake — (I should suppose Dr. Bartwell would have found this locality ere now) — On the road from Jefferson to Corning, 1 mile north of the latter place — On the Rail Road between Corning and Hornellsville, and on the stage road from the latter place to Dansville 1 mile before you reach the village. On Thorns Hill 3 miles West of Bloods Corners, and doubtless in many places in Steuben and other counties bordering on Pensylvania — When travelling in Orange Co on a botanical tour a year ago last December I found in the famous town of Warwick a Phlox growing on the almost naked surface of one of those white christaline rocky ridges elevated 30 or 40 feet above the level, which had the general appearance, and I at first supposed was, the P. subulata — but in selecting plants to send home I perceived that the dead scape? or flower stem was another thing altogether, standing from 3 to 5 inches above the leaves, branching at the summit

into a corymbose form something like the P. divaricata — My sending home live specimens, and the time of year, prevented my taking an accurate description on the spot, but as I said, the plant had the appearance of subulata, leaves similar in form and habit but were finer, softer to the touch, not setaceous, but this elevated stem is the strongest mark of difference observable at that time of year — it certainly is not described in any work in my reach — the live specimens were sent to a botanical friend who thinks they did not survive — This plant must be attended to.

I now wish to call your attention to the Lilium caroliniana. Are you aware that it grows indigenous on this State? — It most assuredly does, for I have a dozen plants in my garden which I collected in Dec. 1850 and April 1851 on Long Island. — My first acquaintance with this beautiful plant was effected through the blunders of a celebrated Nurseryman (Wm. R. Prince) of whom I have purchased several $100, worth of plants — He is notorious for sending plants not ordered as substitutes for those which are — thus he sent me Lilium tigrinum, candidum, Philadelphicum, canadense, which I had growing — On remonstrating with him for such shabby treatment, he promised amendment, and in the next box was another L. Philadelphicum — I had a mind to throw it away, but finally planted it thinking it might be a diferent colour — when it grew I perceived a new plant — as soon as it flowered (which was not until the seed of canadense were full grown) I analysed it, and it agreed in every particular with L. caroliniana and no other. — The plants from Long Island being discovered only by their dry stems, I took them for canadense or possibly superbum, as the dry stem of one was ½ inch diam. & 7 feet high with 13 capsules — This was the largest — I planted them and they are the same as Prince sent, as above stated — The superbum I am not sure that I have, but I brought and planted a remarkable plant last fall which I had watched two summers, it had attracted the notice of the haymakers who first found it adorned with 26 blossoms —

I was too late to see the flowers the first season, but it interested me by its 16 leaves in a whorl — Last summer I saw its gorgeous flowers, counted its 19 leaves in a whorl, and brought it to my garden to see how it would bear cultivation — I now have lying before me, capsules of the canadense & carolinianа, which I picked to day for comparison — The former is 1—1⅛ in. long, pedunele slender, nearly straight — the latter 2 in. long, peduncle 6—7 in long, twice as large, as canadense club shaped and curved thus) These imperfect figures are made by laying them on the paper and marking around them with a pencil — They cannot be of the same species — The flowers of the carolinianа are a long time in expanding after they seem to be full grown, and carolinianа are triangular in shape, the sepals enclosing the petals making it 3 sided (in estivation) — while canadense exhibits, both sepals & petals in canadense estivation making it hexagonal — The stem of carolinianа is very straight & smooth of a beatiful dark shining purple, covered with a bloom that will rub off on being handled — The flowers are large and beatiful, having very minute dots of purple on the midle and lower portions, yet there is a triangular spot of green at the base of the petal unlike any other Lily — These remarks are intended to apply to my plants only — and I wish you would give me your views on my new Lily — at some future time I will give a description of the almost endless variety of colouring and marking of our native Lilies — You will confer an especial favor on me by giving the exact locality of the Lilium superbum that I may obtain specimens for my garden — I have repeatedly ordered it from Prince without succes —

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I will send you an imperfect specimen of the yellow double flowered plant from Black River which I mentioned in my last

[Committee — rare double variety Cult.]

I am
Yours Respectfully
George Stuart